

November 5, 1980

I oppose the change in name of any existing street or part thereof in the City of Newark for any reason whatsoever. Changes of this nature destroy the historical continuity of the City. For instance, I deplore the change of Plane Street to University Avenue. The original name is a reminder of the canal that brought early prosperity to Newark and of the genius of those who planned and constructed it. The structure of Newark has developed over a period of three hundred years. It is like a house. You may wish to alter its superstructure, but you do not destroy any portion of its foundation. Streets and their names are vital parts of Newark's foundation.

Many other valid and compelling reasons for opposing changes in street names were set forth by a member of this Council, as he is quoted in the October 12, 1980, issue of the Star Ledger. I hope his opinions will be reflected in his vote today on this ordinance.

This method of preserving the memory of the Reverend Mr. Johnson does not entail any sacrifice of time, energy, or money on the part of those who knew him personally, of his colleagues in the many organizations in which he served, or of the many individuals who benefitted by his ministry. By contrast, enactment of this ordinance will cause great inconvenience and expense to residents and business establishments on Bergen Street, to a large public institution, and to the city itself.

It should not be necessary to point out that this ordinance is, to say the least, doubly ill-advised and in poor taste, since it seeks to memorialize a living person, a close relative of an incumbent Councilman.

Opposition to this ordinance is not, in any sense, a derogation of the achievements and contributions of the Reverend Mr. B. F. Johnson.

I submit that there are more fitting and appropriate ways to preserve his memory than through a perfunctory vote of the Newark City Council. I suggest that these ways be explored. I ask that this Council reject this ordinance.



D. J. Henderson